A MAN OF THREE WORLDS



Samuel Pallache, a Moroccan Jew in Catholic and Protestant Europe

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Translated by Martin Beagles

With a foreword by
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eral resolved to award Pallache a gold chain, a gold medal, and the sum of 600 florins. Joseph's son Moses, another official interpreter in this embassy, also received a gold medal. Some idea of the relative importance of those making up the Moroccan embassy can perhaps be gauged from the size of the gifts they received: the medal awarded to Samuel weighed 17.5 ounces, whereas the ambassador's weighed 41.5.[62] As soon as negotiations had been finalized, Samuel obtained permission to depart for Morocco with al-Maruni so that the treaty could be ratified by Muley Zaydan. During his absence, which lasted a year, Samuel's brother Joseph acted as his representative, as would become standard family procedure whenever Samuel was forced to leave Holland on business.

We also know interesting details about the agreements reached between the Dutch and the Moroccans thanks to the diligence of Jorge de Henin, the Spanish agent at the court of Muley Zaydan. Henin wrote a series of fascinating reports on Samuel Pallache, described by him as "a servant of the States and of Muley Sidan," and also as "the one who handled the correspondence between the States and Muley Sidan."[63] As we have mentioned above, Henin claimed that when Pallache returned to Holland on the second Moroccan embassy, he took with him diamonds and rubies to exchange for Dutch money and arms on the sultan's behalf. Henin also wrote that Pallache, "in company with some of those moriscos banished from Spain, proposed with eight ships and two thousand harquebusiers whom they would collect on their coasts" to organize "attacks on the coast of Málaga where they are bound to make off with many captives and much wealth."[64] The plan was that Muley Zaydan would procure ships from the Dutch that Pallache and the moriscos could use for raiding missions, after promising to give the sultan a quarter of any booty they managed to obtain. Zaydan himself was in favor of the plan, but Henin had access to Zaydan's mother and managed to get her to dissuade her son from undertaking so risky an enterprise.[65] Nonetheless, this is the first hint in the records that Samuel Pallache had decided to add piracy to his considerable range of activities, which already included diplomatic correspondence, trading in jewels, and espionage. Henin's reports are also remarkable for what they tell us about planned alliances between Jews and moriscos, given that such alliances had occurred only very rarely when these two groups were living in Spain. United by mutual interests, by their knowledge of Iberia, and, no doubt, by a shared feeling of embittered resentment of it, the Jews and the moriscos found themselves in a position where they could try to take advantage of their common backgrounds.[66]

Neither is this the only report of contacts between the moriscos and Muley Zaydan. In April 1611, the Spanish chronicler Cabrera de Córdoba recorded "that certain moriscos had passed over to Africa with an embassy from the rest to the King Muley Cidan offering him 60,000 armed men in Spain and much money, and also to be found there were other ambassadors from the Isles who offered him all the ships he might need to bridge the Strait of Gibraltar." However, Muley Zaydan did not take these morisco representatives seriously and was reported to have "laughed at the morisco embassy."[67]

IN THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED the signing of the treaty, Samuel continued to be involved in a flurry of commercial, diplomatic, and military activity. The thick volumes of collected documents from which we have already quoted so often, the *Sources inédites de l'histoire du Maroc (SIHM)* on the Netherlands, collected and edited by Count Henry de Castries, are full of papers containing references to the Pallaches, who displayed tireless energy throughout this period. Samuel made at least five journeys to Morocco between 1609 and 1614, and in 1611, he also made a business trip to Plymouth in southwestern England.[68] Joseph acted as Samuel's deputy when he was away, but Joseph and Moses both found time to make their own journeys to England. They also traveled widely within the Netherlands, going to Rotterdam, Flushing, and The Hague, where Samuel was based. Joseph and Moses traveled even more frequently to Middelburg, where they sought to take advantage of their alleged status as foreign "ambassadors" to gain exemption from customs dues on imported merchandise.[69]

In business, Samuel Pallache traded with Morocco in collaboration with his Dutch partners, who included leading merchants such as Jan Jansz de Jonge and Symon Willemsz Nooms. We know from a letter of protest from the States General that Samuel was thought to enjoy a virtual monopoly on all Moroccan trade with the Netherlands.[70] This trade consisted mainly in the transportation of Moroccan sugar to Europe, and of Dutch arms and other war material to Morocco. Samuel and Joseph both requested, and were granted, permission to export military equipment to their master Muley Zaydan.[71] They also made incessant requests for loans and advances of money from both the States General and the admiralty of Rotterdam for the chartering and fitting out of ships and the recruitment of crews. In 1614, the admiralty went so far as to lend Samuel and Joseph 20,000 florins. In this decision, it was backed by Prince Maurice, who

openly protected Pallache throughout his time in The Hague and served as a mediator, when necessary, between him and the States General.[72]

Between 1609 and 1614, the Pallaches were involved in frequent litigation with the Dutch crews of the ships whose operations they directed. Some of these lawsuits were brought by the sailors themselves, who accused the Pallaches of not paying their wages and sued them for compensation.[73] Sometimes, however, it was the Pallaches who brought legal actions against their own crews, accusing them of rebellion and, on one occasion, of having stolen part of a sugar cargo.[74] The Pallaches turned continually to the States General in attempts to obtain tax exemptions, to release cargoes that had been detained in Middelburg,[75] or to protest at the mistreatment of one member or another of the family, as on the occasion when Moses traveled to recover a sugar cargo in Flushing and was very badly received.[76] On such occasions, Samuel did not hesitate to declare himself "a public personage and ambassador of his Imperial Majesty in the Netherlands." In addition, Samuel was required to defend himself against various other claims and summonses,[77] and litigation sometimes arose from overseas sources: Pallache's longest and costliest case seems to have been that involving a Frenchman, Jean Le Comte, who intercepted one of Samuel's ships and retained the merchandise it carried on the pretext that it was war material.[78] (Muley Zaydan was forced to pay for the recovery of these items, and he later applied to the States General for reimbursement.) In another case, in 1611, a ship placed at Pallache's disposal by the States General was captured at sea by a Spanish vessel. The captain of the ship, Jacob Janse, embarked on a long legal action against Pallache, which was continued after Janse's death by his widow—as always, what was at stake was the question of responsibility for losses and compensation.

In all of this documentation, Samuel is presented as the head of the Pallache family, chiefly supported by his brother Joseph and his nephew Moses. He engaged in mercantile activity that was extraordinary both for its intensity and its danger, as is shown by the constant flows of litigation and the adventurous nature of his decisions. These decisions were economically and personally hazardous, given that Samuel himself often traveled on ships undertaking extremely risky though lucrative missions. These journeys must have been far from straightforward or relaxing. Voyages were tough and dangerous, and the route from Amsterdam to Morocco, which could not be covered in less than fifty days, was threatened by pirate and corsair ships of various nationalities, as well as the navy ves-

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Moses' cousin Isaac also returned to Morocco, settling at some time after 1623 in
Rabat-Sale, where he made a living from the ransoming of Dutch prisoners."
Isaac's role in Rabat-Sale seems to have been close to that of a Dutch consul,
and ...

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and **Moses** Pallache had always shown toward their sultan. The letter went on to
claim that the Pallaches would never have been able to live in a manner befitting
those of their station if it had not been for the financial assistance over the years ...